



Safe Kids: Protecting Children from Unintentional Injury

In the United States, unintentional injury is the number one cause of child deaths each year. Fortunately, approximately 90 percent of unintentional injuries can be prevented. This fact sheet contains tips you can use to keep your kids safe from unintentional injury.*

Falls

Even seemingly minor falls can injure children.

- Infants can sustain head injuries by falling from strollers, down stairs, off beds, or against sharply pointed furniture
- Toddlers and children up to age 9 are at risk of falling from windows, stairs, trees, garage roofs, and ladders

Falls from Windows

Each year, children are injured by falling from open windows.

- Do not open windows by more than four inches
- Use child-safety window guards or security screens (regular screens will not keep a child from falling out of a window)
- Keep furniture away from windows
- If possible, open your windows from the top

Sun Exposure

Overexposure to sun can cause serious health problems, including skin cancer, eye damage, and immune system suppression.

- Use sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher on kids over six months; keep infants out of direct sunlight; reapply sunscreen as necessary
- Encourage kids to wear hats and sunglasses
- Be aware that the sun is most intense between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Biking, Playing Outdoor, & Traffic

Bikes are associated with more childhood injuries than any consumer product except the automobile.

- Be aware that, whether biking or walking, children under 10 are at increased risk of being hit by a car due to their small size, which makes them hard for drivers to see
- Always wear properly fitted helmets
- Restrict your children's bike riding to daylight hours and safe locations

Cars

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of deaths related to unintentional injury. Additionally, children die each year from strangulation when they press power window switches while leaning out car windows and from heatstroke when they are left inside a car with the windows up.

- Never leave children unsupervised in a car
- Always secure children under 8 years in a child safety seat approved for their age and size

Water & Swimming

Whether they can swim or not, young children are not safe in the water.

- Pools, hot tubs, and wading pools must be supervised; when not in use, fence in, lock, or cover these areas
- Make sure older children swim with another swimmer
- Teach your kids to get out of the water immediately in case of a thunderstorm

Power Tools

Each year, almost 10,000 kids age 15 years and younger are injured by lawn mowers alone.

- Be aware that walk-behind mowers, riding mowers, hedge trimmers, and other power tools pose a serious risk of injury to kids
- Do not allow young children near a power mower when it is in use

Guns

Guns pose an inherent risk to children of all ages.

- Be aware that even infants are endangered by guns if there are older children around
- Store firearms in locked cabinets away from ammunition
- Remember—no child or teenager should know how to access firearms

Pesticides, Poisons, and Other Toxic Chemicals

As soon as children are able to crawl, they are at risk of poisoning from medications, common household chemicals, and pesticides.

- Place bait and traps for pests where children cannot get to them
- Store pesticides and toxic chemicals out of reach of children
- Keep kids, toys, and pets away when pesticides are applied
- Don't let kids play in areas where pesticides have been applied for at least the time indicated on the pesticide label
- Use non-toxic pest control methods

Product Recalls

Many consumer products are released to the public and later found to pose safety risks. For a list of recalled products, please visit www.recalls.gov.

*Information for these tips was obtained from the following sources:

Brody, Jane, *Back to Basics: The Real Risks to Children*, N.Y. Times at F1 (July 13, 2004).

www.parents.com • www.safekids.org • www.yosemite.epa.gov

www.cyberdriveillinois.com • www.injuryfree.org • www.kidshealth.org



Consumer Fraud Hotlines

Chicago

1-800-386-5438

TTY: 1-800-964-3013

Springfield

1-800-243-0618

TTY: 1-877-844-5461

Carbondale

1-800-243-0607

TTY: 1-877-675-9339

www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov